



The Rail Gunner Weekly

41st Fires Brigade



1-21 FA



2-20 FA



589th BSB



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Rail Gunners still on 15-month tour

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

The 41st Fires Brigade stationed out of Fort Hood, Texas, remains on a 15-month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I wanted to make sure our family members and Soldiers understand that our mission here has not changed from day one; we are here for fifteen months," said Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Brigade commander.

Francey says he is concerned that family members may see other units returning to Fort Hood before the 41st Fires Bde., even though those units left Fort Hood after the 41st Fires Bde., and they will be asking the question, "Why did those units get to come home early, and the 41st Fires Brigade is still deployed?"

"People need to understand that any conditions-based redeployment is decided on a number of factors," said Francey. "One of the important things to remember is that we have spent 10 months building and maintaining relationships with our Iraqi Security Partners and any major change in those relationships and support could compromise current security gains."

According to Francey, another reason for main-

taining the 41st Fires Bde., at FOB Delta for the scheduled 15 months is that with all of the other moving parts in Multi-National Division – South, the 41st Fires Bde., provides critical stability within a strategic region in the MND-S area of operations.

"With the increase of Soldiers deploying to Afghanistan and the beginning of the drawdown of Soldiers in Iraq, there are certain areas that need to maintain a strategic military presence," said Francey. "We just happen to be in one of those areas where we are still needed to maintain the current operational level."

The success of the deployment this far, said Francey, is a tribute to the level of professionalism and dedication to the mission shown by the brigade's Soldiers and they have cemented the relationships between the brigade and their Iraqi partners.

"Our Soldiers have performed superbly in the 10 months we have been in theater and I know they will continue to outshine our expectations in the coming five months," said Francey. "I know that they appreciate all of the support from their families back home, and I realize that the families and spouses back at Fort Hood and around the country have the toughest job of us all."

The 41st Fires Brigade began its deployment in June 2008 and is scheduled to return home in September 2009.

Wasit PRT donates wheelchairs for distro in Basra



Soldiers from the Iraqi Ground Forces Command load wheelchair kits into a vehicle near FOB Delta's Entry Control Point 2 April 22. The Baghdad-based Soldiers were tasked to deliver the 101 wheelchairs, donated by the Wasit Provincial Reconstruction Team, to Basra April 24.

Each wheelchair kit, provided by freewheelchairmission.org, consist of a lawn chair, tires, brakes, tire pump, repair kit and padding.

The names of recipients were chosen by the Iraqi Advisors Task Force.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde.

IA mechanics learn the basics of generators

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Mechanics from the Iraqi Army's 8th Motor Transport Regiment attended a six-day generator maintenance course at FOB Delta, improving their self-sufficiency and sustainability.

The Iraqi Army is not staffed with generator mechanics in their maintenance units even though a lot of their units use generators to supply their electricity demands. The Soldiers attending the course are vehicle mechanics who can directly apply the skills learned in the course to help maintain the generators used in the 8th Iraqi Army Division.

"We want to learn as much information from the U.S. mechanics that we can, and gain the experience to maintain the generators," said 1st Sgt. 'Ali Mahdi Jassim, 8th MTR.

Jassim and the three mechanics in the course work in the 8th MTR's maintenance company whose original responsibility was service and maintenance of humvees and trucks but now also includes generators.

"We have a big generator at 8th MTR and each company has a small generator," said Jassim. "Everything we learn here, we will go back to 8th MTR to teach the other Soldiers about how to fix and maintain the generators."

The course focuses on: the proper startup and shutdown procedures; hooking up the load and the proper phase for the electrical current; proper preventive maintenance checks and services; and changing main generator components.

"This class is going pretty good," said Spc. Patrick Armstrong, generator mechanic, Company B, 589th Brigade Support Battalion. "This is actually the third set of Iraqis I trained, and they comprehend this stuff a lot easier than the other groups I've trained."

All of the Soldiers in the class have prior vehicle maintenance experience which helps them to understand the basics of generator maintenance, according to Armstrong.

"I think that them coming from an MTR has a major effect on how



The three 8th MTR mechanics listen to Spc. Patrick Armstrong, of Pittsburgh, explain what possible problems to look for while conducting PMCS during the six-day generator maintenance class at FOB Delta.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

easily they understand it because one, they know they are going to use it; two, they have some basic knowledge of how maintenance goes; I am just helping them to understand generator maintenance," said Armstrong.

Training the 8th MTR Soldiers gives them a skill that will go a long way in making sure they can operate and maintain the generators they have for a long time, said Armstrong.

"I think that this actually goes a lot towards helping them get on their feet and being able to take care of their own equipment which helps them to be self-sufficient," added Armstrong.

Iraqi medics enhance trauma care skills

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Four Iraqi Army 8th Motor Transport Regiment medics put their skills to the test during a lanes exercise at the FOB Delta troop medical clinic April 24.

The lanes were the culmination of a six-day

class taught by medics in Company C, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade.

"We changed the conditions on them," said Capt. Jake Bustoz, medical advisor, 8th MTR Military Transition Team.

Bustoz, a native of Post, Texas, said the medics in the Numaniyah-based unit are very skilled in clinical medicine, but haven't had

much experience in trauma care.

The medics typically stay in the ambulance during patrols and therefore rarely have to perform in combat situations, said Petty Officer 1st Class Curtis Derrick, of Albuquerque, N.M., a medic with the 8th MTR MiTT.

The lanes were designed to be similar to the end of a combat lifesaver class, said Staff Sgt. Reginald Lockett, of Cleveland, one of the class instructors.

To pass the class, each medic had to quickly get to the patient, get their patient into a safe zone, assess and start treating injuries, start an intravenous line and call a litter team to transport the patient to the ambulance – all while Lockett and his fellow instructors yelled, imitated gunfire and splashed water to recreate a hostile situation.

The first two students successfully completed the course; the last two needed more practice giving IVs in the outdoor setting.

The Iraqis said they look forward to working with the FOB Delta medics for more training.

"We thank you for what you did for us, but we have to get more information," said Pvt. Ali Ibrahim Zuqier.

Bustoz said he's found inspiration while working with the Iraqi medics.

"The more time we spend with them, I see their passion coming out," said Bustoz. "Their innovation to do more with less gives me motivation."



Pvt. Ali Ibrahim Zuqier, medic, 8th MTR, applies a bandage to a comrade's wound during a trauma care lanes exercise April 24 at the end of training taught by medics in Co. C, 589th BSB on FOB Delta.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

589th BSB wins DA-level safety award

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

The Iron Caissons of 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade, were named the first recipients of the Army Industrial Operations Safety Award April 14.

It is the second DA-level award the battalion has won since standing up in 2005.

"What I think helped our battalion win is the constant safety considerations we take into account on a daily basis. A lot of our Soldiers work hands-on with heavy and hazardous equipment and it is imperative that the (noncommissioned officers-in-charge) and NCOs train their Soldiers well to make them conscious of the risks they face doing their jobs," said 1st Lt. Andrea Radu, of Andover, N.J., battalion safety officer and executive officer of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 589th BSB.

The battalion had only been in Iraq for four months when the nomination packet was due but that short period gave the Soldiers opportunities to show off their training.

The ammunition holding and transfer point, containing \$2 million of ammunition and 100,000 pounds of net weight explosives, was new when the battalion arrived in June, said Lt. Col. Ina Yahn, battalion commander, of Gataivai, American Samoa. The Iron Caissons also established a fuel point and motor pool to help other units on FOB Delta stay mission-ready, Yahn added.

An average of 100 Soldiers work or interact in the motor pool every day, performing maintenance on nearly 100 vehicles per week – with no incidents thus far, said Sgt. 1st Class San-



tiago Rodriguez, of Bronte, Texas, battalion motor sergeant.

"We have constant NCO supervision," said Staff Sgt. Steven Berndt, of Elgin, Ill., shop foreman, Company B, of the motor pool run by the company.

The sudden departure of the 1st Georgian Infantry Brigade in August 2008 also gave the Iron Caissons an opportunity to shine.

The movement control team sent the approximately 1,400 Georgians back to their homeland in 96 hours; when they cleared the joint security stations 589th BSB sent out their food service Soldiers to bring the feeding areas up to standards for the incoming 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Soldiers made the JSSs their new home.

Company A also went into overdrive, delivering 112,000 gallons of fuel and 170,000 gallons of water to the JSSs, said Radu. Drivers for the logistical patrols cross-train on a

Sgt. 1st Class Santiago Rodriguez, 589th BSB motor sergeant, of Bronte, Texas, and Staff Sgt. Steven Berndt, shop foreman, of Elgin, Ill., observe as a Soldier conducts vehicle repairs. Berndt said he and his fellow NCOs in the motor pool promote a "safety friendly environment," one reason that the battalion was named the first winner of the Army Industrial Operations Safety Award.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

variety of vehicles so no one gets fatigued on the road, Radu noted in the nomination packet.

"The difference was made by leaders enforcing standards and Soldiers following and complying with instructions," said Maj. Carmelo Madera, of Guayama, Puerto Rico, executive officer, 589th BSB, who was commander of Co. A during the nomination period.

The battalion retained most of the same Soldiers whose efforts earned the 589th BSB the Army Award for Maintenance Excellence in 2007, based on the unit's deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-06. The additional recognition was welcome news to the Iron Caissons.

"I'm not surprised but I appreciate it," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Donell Davis, of Baltimore, battalion maintenance technician.

"I'm proud of our guys," seconds Yahn. "We have two awards, two deployments – we're setting a precedent!"

Surgeon's Section

By Capt. N.I. Okpokwasili, D.O., M.S.
41st Fires Bde. Surgeon

Is it truly as important to stay hydrated as is pushed down by big Army? Really? So what if you don't stay hydrated; the ramifications cannot be all that bad, can they?

Many of you who are reading this are probably wondering what is wrong with me or think perhaps I have heatstroke myself. For the record, I am not suffering from any mental relapse. Of course it is important to stay hydrated, especially in a very hot environment. If not properly hydrated the consequences are serious enough where one can DIE.

The thing many people, especially Soldiers, do not realize is that taking supplements can be the equivalent to NOT drinking water. Your kidneys work to flush your system and that is why you can often tell by the color of your urine how hydrated you are.

Various supplements, like creatine, "Nitro Explode," amino acids and "fat burners" can overload one's kidneys. The kidney has to do extra work to clear the substances and when you add the heat of the environment, you are truly stressing your kidneys. Basically, if one takes supplements like that then that person should drink two to three times more water than a Soldier who is not taking supplements.

With proper diet and exercise, instead of supplements, one can get in good physical shape. If you are concerned about your weight or need advice on physical conditioning, see a medical provider or nutritionist. Stay hydrated, taking into account the heat, your activity and any supplements you might still be taking. Is taking that "fat burner" worth acute kidney failure?

Worship Opportunities Sunday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Traditional Protestant	0900
Latter-day Saints	1030
Gospel Service	1300
Reconciliation service	1830
Catholic Mass (English)	1930

Monday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Catholic Mass	0800

Tuesday

<i>Mayor Cell</i>	
Bible Study	1930
<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Bible Study	2000

Thursday

<i>TMC</i>	
Bible Study	1930

Saturday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Catholic Mass	0800
Christian Movie Night	2000

Iraqis learn, plan to pass on, welding skills



Sgt. Rahim Taraq, 8th MTR, practices oxy-acetylene welding as the other two members of the class watch his technique. The skills learned in oxy-acetylene welding are the fundamental building blocks for the rest of the welding techniques learned during the six-day course at FOB Delta.

*Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO*

**By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO**

Iraqi Army Soldiers were held to the fire, so to speak, as they learned the basics of welding from U.S. Soldiers at FOB Delta.

The goal of the training is to provide Iraqi Army Soldiers a sustainable skill set that they can use and pass on to their fellow Soldiers, which will help their unit to become self-sufficient before the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq.

"All of the training is very good right now, and we are getting good experience from the U.S. Soldiers," said Pvt. Hussam Kaidair Abdulhadi, 8th Motor Transport Regiment.

"We can teach the other Soldiers who are working at the 8th MTR, using the training and the new welding techniques and methods we've learned here," added Hussam, one of three IA Soldiers in the class.

The six-day welding course starts with a heavy emphasis on shop safety and then moves onto oxy-acetylene welding, which incorporates the basic fundamentals of welding that are used throughout the rest of the welding techniques.

"They are doing outstanding," said Sgt. Richard Fierro, shop foreman, Service and Repair Section, Company B, 589th Brigade Support Battalion. "They're real motivated and

ready to learn the welding techniques we're trying to teach them."

"Everything that we've thrown at them they're giving us feedback and asking a lot of questions which is outstanding," said Fierro, from El Paso, Texas.

Welding is a skill that is not only beneficial for the 8th Motor Transport Regiment -- which functions much like a brigade support battalion except at the division level -- but it is a skill that can also be used in the future for the Soldiers attending the training.

"I hope to pass on these skills to the Soldiers at the 8th MTR, but also I can use these skills in the future for a job outside of the Iraqi Army," said Sgt. Rahim Taraq, 8th MTR.

This group of Iraqi Soldiers is the third group to participate in the six-day welding course and they have been the quickest to pick up the techniques.

"Compared to all our training groups this is the best group we've had," said Staff Sgt. Philip Daniels, section chief, S and R section, Co. B, 589th BSB. "They're keying in on what we're saying, they're staying focus and motivated through all the training."

"It's been a great experience working with these guys, giving them hands on training, and working with the Iraqi Army is a great experience for both of us," said Daniels, of Greenville, S.C. "It's real rewarding."

Delta runners dominate Boston Marathon in Iraq

**By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO**

Please see RACE, page 5

Two out of four runners from FOB Delta each won first place for their gender in the Boston Marathon at COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq.

Maj. Harland Peelle was the first male to cross the finish line with a time of 2 hours, 54 minutes and 39 seconds, while Maj. Deydre Teyhen was the first female to finish with a time of 3:30:31.

Both Peelle and Teyhen said they were surprised when they realized how well they were doing.

"At the start someone took off a bit faster than I had wanted, so I tried my best to stay in striking distance and no one behind me was pushing," said Peelle, team leader of the FOB Delta Defense Contract Management Agency.

The leader picked up the pace toward the end of the first lap and Peelle said he couldn't find him as he passed the half-way point. Soon thereafter, a volunteer told Peelle that the other runner was only competing in the half-marathon, and that Peelle was in the lead.

"This was a great feeling and I was able to press my pace to a 2:54:39 finish, a new personal record for me," said Peelle, of Leesburg, Va.

Peelle said his spirit was amplified when he heard about Teyhen, who had a similar experience taking the lead.

"I was just running and all of a sudden there was a vehicle trailing me," said Teyhen, officer-in-charge of 10th Combat Support Hospital personnel at FOB Delta. Teyhen said she shaved 11 minutes off her previous personal best time.

Teyhen had another teammate running with her a continent away -- her husband, Col. John Teyhen, ran the marathon in Boston. The couple has been on a quest to run a marathon in all 50 states and then the seven continents, as well as qualifying for the Boston Marathon, Teyhen said. They both qualified for the 2009 event, but in November she received her deployment orders.

"So I was very excited to find out that the Boston Athletic Associa-



From left: U.S. Air Force Capt. Ciro De la Vega and Maj. Harland Peelle, Army Maj. Deydre Teyhen and Michael Whitescarver pose together after the Boston Marathon in Iraq on COB Adder April 18. Peelle was the first man across the finish line and Teyhen was the first woman.

Photo courtesy of Maj. Deydre Teyhen

Comanche platoon leader takes command

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

After leading his battery through a merge and four mission changes, Capt. Robert Plowey relinquished command of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, to one of his own.

Capt. Timothy Martin, a platoon leader in the battery, took command of Btry. C during a ceremony on FOB Delta April 20.

"You are also a product of this great formation and love it every bit as much as I do," Plowey, a Pittsburgh native, told Martin in his speech.

Martin, as well as the other Soldiers who had made up Btry. B, joined the Comanche team when the battalion received orders in January 2008 to deploy to Camp Bucca that April for a detainee operations mission. The batteries merged to create a military police company.

Comanche received new orders, 90 days after their arrival at Camp Bucca, to perform civil affairs and security missions at Camp Basra, so they moved to Kuwait to retrain.

They moved to FOB Delta in early April 2009.

"Throughout this remarkable journey, during which the battery served under five different battalion-level headquarters, the Soldiers of Charlie Battery exceeded every standard, accomplished every mission and took care of each other," said Lt. Col. Yingling, 1-21 FA commander, a native of Pittsburgh.

Yingling also said that he had considered assigning Martin to a staff position, but Martin specifically asked for the opportunity to lead Soldiers.

Martin expressed his gratitude for the position during his turn to speak.

"The opportunity to command Soldiers that I have grown to consider family is a rare one and I will strive to continue the path of operational excellence that we have established in the streets of Basra," said Martin, of Midland, Mich.

Martin, a graduate of Michigan State University, served as a fire platoon leader in Btry. B, 1-21 FA, before the merge.

Plowey, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, will stay in the 41st Fires Brigade, taking command of the brigade's headquarters battery May 1.



1st Sgt. Michael Bey, Btry. C, 1-21 FA, passes the guidon to Capt. Robert Plowey, outgoing commander, at the change-of-command ceremony April 20.

Photo by Sgt. Dylan Tyahla, C/1-21 FA

RACE, cont.'d from page 4

tion sponsors a version of the Boston Marathon in Iraq," Teyhen said. She said her husband had an injured heel, but it held up long enough for him to finish the race.

In addition to running "together," the Teyhens were able to raise money for "Home for our Troops" which builds houses for injured Soldiers.

Another teammate ran with a loved one in mind.

Capt. Ciro De la Vega, a trainer with the Coalition Air Force Training Team, said he carried a rock to remind him of his oldest daughter, Paige, who is a long-distance runner for her high school in Ramstein, Germany.

"We raced a 5k against each other at the 2007 European cross-country regionals. We had plans to race at the 2008 regionals but I deployed and we didn't get to," said De la Vega, originally from Manhattan, Kan.

De la Vega said he also beat his two goals: first, to just finish the race; and second, to finish in under four hours. He beat his goal by six minutes.

The fourth member of the FOB Delta team also achieved his personal goals.

"My motivation was simply to qualify to run the real Boston Marathon next year," said Maj. Mike Whitescarver, of Heidelberg, Germany, a civil affairs officer who works with the Wasit Provincial Reconstruction Team, of his 4:18:41 finish.

All four of the team members are now qualified to run the race in Boston next year.

PSD celebrates promotion, re-enlistment



Left: Sgt. Michael Williford (right), of Desoto, Mo., 41st Fires Brigade personal security team, is promoted by Staff Sgt. Christopher Fernandez, of Tucson, Ariz., during a ceremony in the brigade headquarters lobby April 24.

Right: Cpl. Brandon Morrison, of Jasper, Ala., brigade PST, re-enlists with the Oath of Enlistment administered by Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Bde. commander, of Brockton, Mass., during a ceremony in the brigade headquarters lobby April 24.



Photos by
Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO